

# CATHOLIC ART QUARTERLY



## THE CATHOLIC ART ASSOCIATION

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NUMBER 1

# The Catholic Art Quarterly

Official Bulletin of the Catholic Art Association.  
Published four times a year, Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, Michaelmas,  
at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota.

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Since the *Catholic Art Quarterly* appears only four times a year and space is consequently valuable, the policy has been adopted of not publishing material that is easily accessible in secular sources unless it is presented from a new or important angle, or is given a Catholic interpretation, and is in accord with Catholic Art Association principles.

## C.A.A. MEMBERSHIPS AND PRIVILEGES

SUSTAINING MEMBERS contribute \$25.00 annually toward the maintenance of the Association's work, receive the *Catholic Art Quarterly*, vote in all elections, and have access to the library and the exhibits.

PATRONAL MEMBERS contribute \$5.00 annually and have the above privileges.

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS (schools, clubs, etc.) contribute \$5.00 annually send two voting delegates to conventions, have extended exhibit privileges, receive a subscription to the *Catholic Art Quarterly*, and may use the library and exhibits.

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National and regional conference privileges are shared by all members. Any member approved by the Advisory Board is eligible for office in the C.A.A. elections.



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## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear C.A.A. Members:

In the annual voting upon C.A.A. officers in November, the following members were elected:

President: Rev. Angelo Zankl, O.S.B.  
Editor: Rev. Dunstan Tucker, O.S.B.  
Secretary: Sister Philomene, C.S.J.  
Treasurer: Mr. Frank F. Seaman.  
Professional Chairman: Mr. Melvin Steinfelds.  
Educational Chairman: Sister Philomena, O.P.

To the outgoing officers I extend in the name of the entire association heartfelt thanks for their untiring zeal and devotion to the cause of the C.A.A., and I express the hope that their successors will maintain the unflagging energy set as a standard by their predecessors in office.

A special word of deep gratitude, of esteem and of regret is due to the outgoing secretary, Sister Helene, O.P. Forced to retire her name from the list of candidates because of impaired health and the pressure of work, the executive board has suffered an inestimable loss in losing her outstanding services. Being a charter member of the C.A.A., and holding the office of national secretary since the association's reorganization in 1940, Sister Helene, it is no exaggeration to say, more than any other individual understood our problems and ironed out many an executive ruffle to effect the smoothly functioning organization the C.A.A. now is. It would take pages to recount all her efficient services given freely and lovingly, and the entire C.A.A. is a perpetual debtor to her spirit.

A cheering note in the election was the whole-hearted approval given to the reworded constitution, with only three dissenting votes against it. It is a significant testimonial of the thoroughness with which the task of recasting was done.

One item in the Constitution which should be called to the attention of the members at the present time is the matter of the election of regional directors. The Constitution states: *Each region elects its officers annually and must meet at least once annually to be considered active.* Attention is furthermore called

to the section in the Constitution concerning the election of the regional director: *The regional director is nominated by the executive board from the regional membership in good standing, and holds office for one year with eligibility for reelection.* The regional directors nominated by the executive board to be elected by their respective regions at the first regional meeting in 1944 are the following:

#### NEW ENGLAND

Miss Ade Bethune—Rhode Island  
Sister M. Mercedes, R.S.M.—Rhode Island  
Sister M. Dalmatius, O.P.—Massachusetts

#### EASTERN

Sister M. Noreen, SSND—Maryland  
Sister Immaculee, S.P.—Washington, D.C.  
Mrs. Foster Stearns—Washington, D.C.

#### EAST CENTRAL

Sister Augusta, S.C.—Ohio  
Sister M. Carlotta, S.N.D.—Kentucky

#### CENTRAL

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Sister M. Helena, O.S.F.—Illinois

#### NORTH CENTRAL

Sister M. Irena, O.S.B.—Minnesota  
Sister M. Norbert, R.S.M.—Iowa  
Sister M. Salome, O.S.B.—Minnesota

Immediately upon being elected, the name of the director is to be sent to the president and the appointee assumes office until the following annual election. It is my hope that these regional elections take place as soon as possible to expedite the work of the association.

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
Angelo Zankl, O.S.B.



# Symbolism

By GRAHAM CAREY

CHRIST'S revelation of religious truth to his Church is the most complete of revelations. It contains within itself all the truths proclaimed by other religions. We Catholics have been given the greatest talent and therefore ought to succeed in integrating ourselves and our lives more completely than any other human group. It is an unfortunate fact, however, that most of us have been only too eager to adopt the secular standards of the non-Catholic world around us whenever and wherever we thought we could do so without actually falling into mortal sin. We have tried to show that we are just as good as our neighbors, and have ended by attempting to live by two contradicting creeds.

The C.A.A. is dedicated to the task of reviving in Catholic minds their Catholic heritage in the field of the arts, of reuniting in us what God has joined together but secularism has put asunder. Catholic art has become definitely degenerate, and the C.A.A. proposes to do what it can to regenerate it.

One way of approaching the problem is to examine the arts of people who have succeeded better than we have done in integrating their lives with whatever truth they may possess. The body of religious truth available to most of them is less than that which is available to us, but they have made more of their lesser talent. When we come to study the arts of mankind, we are forced to admit that the majority of these arts are far healthier than our own. There have been, it is true, frivolous and secular cultures in the past, and such may exist among "primitive" people elsewhere today, but taking the history of mankind as a whole, both before and after the Incarnation, the majority of people have taken the sacred, or serious, or traditional view of life, and made better use of the truth available to them than we make of the truth available to us.

This paper and the two which are to follow it in the Easter and Pentecost issues are attempts to examine the arts of pre-Christian and Christian peoples from three more or less closely related points of view. In this installment we will consider briefly the nature of symbolism, and in the two following the natures of superstition and ornament.

## WHAT SYMBOLISM IS

GOD created Man, and He created the universe to be his habitation. He created these in such a way that it is impossible for man to live in the universe without making things—tools, clothes, houses—that is, without exercising useful arts.

God created the Universe also in order to reveal to man something of his nature. "The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." "For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood through the things that are made:



His eternal power also and divinity" (Rom. 1, 20). "If anyone shall say that the One True God, our Creator and Lord, cannot 'through the things that are made' be certainly known by the natural light of human reason—let him be anathema" (Vatican Council Can. 1. *De Revelatione*).

God also offered to man the privilege of trying to imitate Him.

The normal human creature, therefore, while he perforce makes things, does so as far as possible in imitation of God's making. *Ars imitatur Naturam in sua operatione*. In the practice of his arts he tries microcosmically to parallel in some fashion God's creation of the universe. But in so doing his artistic act is also a sort of thankful statement to God that he has understood some part of the rational revelation. It is an act of gratitude and love, as well as an act of emulation.

This making of things necessary for our physical life and at the same time expressing their analogies with divine making is one kind of symbolism. In it an object is produced which is of service both to the body and the spirit. It is physically useful and at the same time helps man to express his love of God. But there is another kind of symbolism which has no physical function, but is a support for contemplation only. A man may make a cross of two pieces of wood, and he has made something that aids him in his devotion but which is of no use to his bodily life. He may also make an object of purely physical use which, as far as his conscious intention goes, has no symbolic content whatsoever. But even this—although the fact is no part of his purpose—carries symbolic meaning in many ways. His act typifies the Trinity, in the relationship of maker, thing made, and the act of making. Whatever Goodness, Truth or Beauty the object possesses, it typifies the Divine Goodness, Truth and Beauty, etc. Everything made is a symbol or a vestige of God, whether the analogies are realized or not. But we usually confine the word *symbol* to the *intentional* expression of profound analogies.

A symbol then is the expression, by means of analogy, of fundamental and basic metaphysical and religious truths. As we have seen, its primary purpose is the service of God. Its secondary purpose is the service of our brother, man. Thus a symbol may be useful to human beings as a support for contemplation, or as a reminder of the truth which it embodies, or as a clarification of that idea in the mind, or as a means of transferring it to other minds. It is an economical statement more succinct than any literary exposition. But we should remember that all these are secondary functions. A symbol is not first and foremost a communicative instrument. It is not just an educational tool. It is an art product whose prime purpose is to give glory to God.

All this seems very reasonable and logical, but at the same time it may seem strange to us. Our minds are not accustomed to work that way. In making a hen-coop or baking a loaf of bread we do not naturally see analogies of the relationship of God and man. The sad truth is that our minds are spoiled and do not work in a direct and normal manner. To show how unspoiled minds work, even when the spiritual material they have to work with is meager, let us briefly examine a few of the traditional analogies that lie behind the symbolic expression of the great majority of primitive peoples. We cannot under-



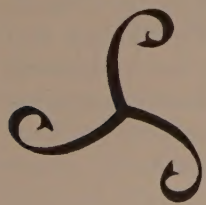
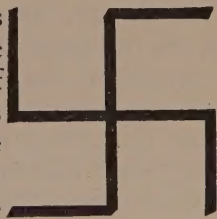
stand the conventional symbols men have made until we grasp something of such natural analogies. We will glance briefly at four: the Pole Star, the Sun, the Universal Axis, and the Cosmos as the abode of mankind.

### THE POLE STAR

FROM the beginning men must have made use of the stars as a guide at night.

There is often little or nothing else, either at sea or ashore, which can give a man direction, once the light of the sun has disappeared. But the stars have a most inconvenient way of wheeling about in the sky which makes them inaccurate directors for any length of time. The star you have chosen soon after sunset may have turned by midnight far out of the way you wish to follow. Of all the myriads of stars visible to us in the Northern Hemisphere, only one seems independent of this movement. To the eye unaided by instruments the Pole Star is motionless and is therefore dependable as a guide under all conditions. It is the one object in the visible universe which maintains this dignified immobility. It is the unmoving point around which all else turns, and which thus gives that turning its significance.

To see this star as a type of the eternal and changeless God was obvious. Throughout the Northern Hemisphere the analogy was popular and its symbol is common. North of the equator, in both the Old World and the New, emblems are found scattered everywhere which represent the Pole Star and the northern constellations in rotation around it. One of these—the Swastika—is believed to show the posi-



tions of the Big Dipper at the equinoxes and solstices and therefore to stand for the yearly cycle. Another—the Triskelion—represents the three positions of the Little Dipper visible on any particular night, and therefore the daily cycle. Shakespeare makes Caesar refer to this ancient analogy, practically claiming divinity for himself, and thus infuriating the conspirators, who immediately assassinate him.

“But I am constant as the northern star,  
Of whose true-fixed and resting quality  
There is no fellow in the firmament.  
The skies are painted with unnumbered sparks,  
They are all fire, and every one doth shine;  
But there’s but one in all doth hold his place:  
So in the world...”

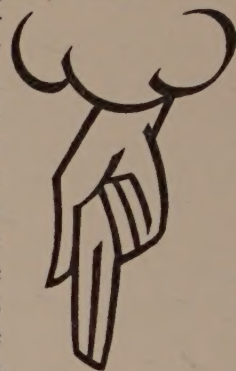
(The three running legs which form the bearing of the coat of arms of the Isle of Man, and the same device shown on the shield of a warrior in a Greek vase painting, are believed to be forms of the Triskelion. The ancient Mexicans also associated feet and legs with the revolution of the polar con-





stellation. (See also Zelia Nuttall: "*The Fundamental Principles Of Old and New World Civilizations*," Peabody Museum of American Archeology and Etymology; Harvard, 1901.)

The Pole Star symbol was not one of those that were perpetuated by the early Christians. The reason seems to be this. The early centuries of the Church, down to the Middle Ages, were the time when symbolism was most healthy and living, and it was then the Catholic symbolic traditions were developed. During the same period the words of Christ to Philip, "He that seeth me seeth the Father also. . . . Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me?" (John 14, 9-10), were most strictly interpreted. It was considered improper to risk the dangers of anthropomorphism and commit the absurdity of attempting to represent the unrepresentable, when the desired end could be achieved in the way Christ Himself had suggested at the most solemn and awful moment of His teaching. Christ therefore was represented but not the Father. This strict interpretation of the words to Philip accounts not only for the lack of emblems for the First Person, but also for the fatherly and majestic aspect of the images of the Second Person. Before the high Middle Ages almost the only representations of God the Father we find are in occasional Trinity symbols, and in the Creator's hand descending from clouds. The venerable man with the long beard does not appear before the 13th century, and is not common until the 14th. It was the Renaissance that gave this image the familiarity which it has for us today. Its use was never approved by the Church but was merely tolerated at a time when much else of doubtful propriety was permitted. Later philosophers developed the conception of the motionlessness of God, but it seems likely that it was the strength of the prohibition against representing directly the *unmoving mover* that prevented this concept from finding symbolic expression among Christians in the Star of the North.



#### THE SUN

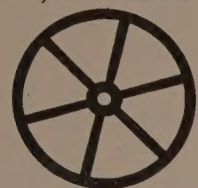
A MORE obvious and universal symbol of God is the Sun. "There is," writes Dante, "no visible thing in all the world more worthy to serve as a type of God than the Sun" (Note: *Il Convito*, III, 12, Trans. by E. P. Sayer, London, 1887, p. 144). The man who understands something of the goodness of God and the goodness of the Sun's life-giving warmth naturally sees an analogy between them. He may also see the parallelism between the physical illumination of bodies by the Sun's light and the spiritual illumination of minds by God's truth. And he may connect the glorious splendor of the Sun with God's surpassing beauty, from which, as Dionysius the Areopagite has written, all things that are derive their being. (Note: "Ex divina pulchritudine esse omnium deriva-





tur:" *De Divinis Nominibus*, cap. 4, lect. 5 of the Commentary of St. Thomas).

The Sun is the most clear, most worthy and most universal of all the objects which have been used as analogies of God. Both north and south of the equator, in every region and at every period, men have seen the analogy, and have expressed it in their various fashions. For the people of cooler climates the Sun naturally tends to become the type of God conceived as the beneficent bestower of graces. This is commonly symbolized by a variety



of objects which have the general shape of lines radiating from a central round opening. The rafters of a circular roof, the spokes of a wheel, and the raylike threads of a spider's web are among these sun symbols. For the inhabitants of more torrid climes, the sun is apt to typify God in His more terrible aspect, God the Destroyer, the just avenger of crimes. The Eagle, the Bull and the Lion, are sun symbols of this sort. But both as gentle Father, granter of graces, and as stern judge, punisher of transgressions, the solar analogies hold.



According to the pagan Plutarch, only the stupidest failed to understand that these were analogies, for he writes that "there are some so unintelligent as to confuse Apollo with the Sun, so as to take one for the other."

For an understanding of ancient symbolic thought it is essential to remember that primitive people in general regarded the blue vault of the heavens as a solid dome, outside which is the blinding empyrean light in-

habited by whatever divinities there may be. The Sun is conceived to be a round hole in this blue dome, which admits a little of the heavenly radiance to the lower world where mortal men dwell. Smaller holes, visible only at night, admit little chinks of the same light, and these we call the stars. If we wish to understand



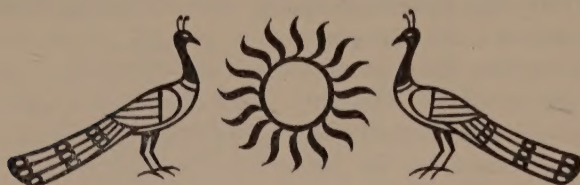
primitive symbolism we must always keep in mind the hole. Even in our own English *sun* and *hole* are connected by the word *eye*, which stands for both. If we think a moment, we see that our ancestors did not use these words to stand for ideas as distinct from one another as we are accustomed to do. "The Night hath a thousand eyes, the Day but one." "The glorious Summer...turning with splendor of his precious eye the meager cloddy earth to glittering gold" (King John III, 1, 79). These are not fantasies of individual poets, but repetitions of a time-

honored analogy, which is also expressed in *daisy—day's eye* (Anglo-Saxon *daeges eaye*), a flower so named from its resemblance to the sun. So also *eye* is



still used in many connections for a *hole*: e.g., in a needle, in an ax head, in the hank of an anchor. We have hooks and eyes, screw eyes, and eyelets for laces. The hole in the upper millstone into which the grain is poured is called *eye*; so was formerly a fox's burrow, the chimney of a kiln, and the opening in the top of a dome. Indeed, our word *window* was originally *wind eye*, a hole for the admission of wind or air.

The Catholic Church, in the formative period of its symbolism, used the Sun freely as a type of Christ. The writings of St. Clement, Origen, and St.



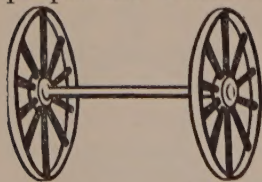
Gregory Nazianzen are full of the image of Christ as the Rising Sun. They are fond of developing the phrase of the 18th Psalm "In sole posuit tabernaculum suum." The Antiphon of the Magnificat for

December 21st, the winter solstice, has: "O Oriens, splendor lucis aeternae, et sol justitiae." On carved sarcophagi of the time of Constantine the symbol is common. In the Musée Lapidaire at Arles there are many examples. At Ravenna there are sarcophagi showing the Sun flanked by peacocks. But even in these early days there seems to have been a tendency to confuse the symbol with that which is symbolized, and Pope Leo the Great took the trouble to condemn formally those who actually worship the physical sun.

#### THE AXIS

THE word "universe," the turning unit, the single thing that revolves, expresses the ancient idea of a rotating cosmos. The wheeling of the stars implies a universal axis about which that wheeling takes place. At one end of this axis is the Pole Star or the Sun, and at the other the earth and the observer. By analogy, at one end is God and at the other man. That which connects God and man is their relationship, which to man must be the most important of all relationships. Upon it all else, great or little, turns.

If we conceive the Pole Star at the farther end of the axis the analogy is perfect. If we place the Sun there, the analogy is not quite so perfect, but is sufficiently so to have appealed strongly to primitive people the world over. The notion of a universal, invisible pillar,

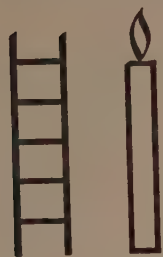


separating and joining heaven and earth is woven firmly into the fabric of metaphysical expression everywhere.

This idea takes a rich variety of symbolic forms. It appears as the axle that connects the Wheel of Heaven with the Wheel of Earth, the column or the Atlantean giant that holds up the sky, the Tree of Life, or the Lance with which Michael smote the serpent. Religion is that which binds man to God, and so almost any vertical shaft, which either, like a tree or a ladder, can be thought of as a means of ascent, or with a light at its top like a candle, or with a hole at its top like a needle, comes to be associated with



religion. And in every part of the earth the holy place where the principal tower, or pillar or mast stands, tends to be regarded as the central point of the universe itself (For innumerable examples see William F. Warren, *Paradise Found*, Boston, 1885, especially Part Five, chap. IV, "The Navel of the Earth;" and chap. VI, "The Central Tree").



It seems curious at first that a concept so primary and so universal was so little adopted into the symbolism of the Church. But we must remember that the notion of the cosmic Axis was associated with the pagan religions, and that the most of these religions with which the early

Christians came into contact were in a state of rather advanced corruption. But the chief reason must be that the idea really was taken over but was swallowed up by the imagery of the Cross. The Cross is the great Christian symbol. It includes in its physical shape the vertical shaft of the pre-Christian *stauros*, God and man. The emphasis upon the vertical axis above the altar at the crossing of nave and transept is another adaptation of the primitive symbolism, particularly when that axis is marked by a spire topped with a cross or the *Chi Rho*. When the altar is covered by a dome, pierced at its top with an "eye" or round hole, the meaning is no less solar, though perhaps not



so obviously so. It seems also possible that the devotion to the Pillar of the Passion, particularly in Spain, may have been tinged at least to some extent by pre-Christian association.

#### THE COSMIC HOUSE

A VAST variety of primitive houses are of the same general type, differing rather in the materials used and the methods of handling them, than in their basic plan. Whether of stones, wood, wicker work, skins, bark, or clay, the simplest human houses have a marked unity of pattern, and we may assume that this unity goes back to the remotest times.

A circular flat space is covered by a roof, in the center of which is a round hole. Below this hole is the domestic fire, often kindled on a flat stone. The roof may be of corbelled stones, sunbaked mud bricks, or blocks of frozen snow, and thus self-supporting, but in most cases it is held up either by a central post, like a tent pole, or by radiating rafters. In this roofed space the family lives protected from the weather and from other dangers. Here, grouped about the central hearth, they are at home. Here is comfort and repose and feasting. Here is privacy. The hole at the top of the roof serves equally as window, chimney and door. Light radiates down through it, smoke passes through it, and through it the indwellers pass from their little domestic world into the great outdoors.

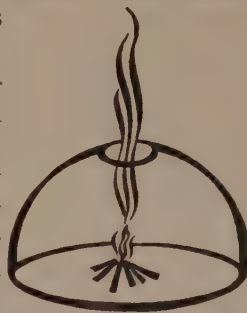
With all the special variations on this central type of house that



particular circumstances have made necessary, such in general was the kind of structure that primitive man thought of as embodying "home." Individual man and his family inhabited a house, and such was its simple shape—flat floor, hearth, roof and central hole.



But the human race—man in general—has a habitation also, and this is the whole habitable world. Here is another basic and universally understood analogy. The apparently flat Earth corresponds to the floor of the family dwelling. At its center is the "focus" or fireplace, the



point *where we are*, the center of our world. Above the level ground arches the great blue world-roof. As the Sun is conceived of as a round hole in the celestial dome, so the round hole in the little dome becomes an analogue of the Sun, and the Sun itself takes on the attributes of the man-made aperture. The Sun becomes thought of as a door through which must pass whatever travels from this world to the next, from the twilight of this earthly life to the brightness of eternal light. It is through the Sun-Door that our souls must pass when in death they leave our bodies. And the Sun is also a chimney. Our prayers rise up from this world and enter the next, just as the smoke in a "pillar" or "column" rises from our hearth to the great world without. Thus the central pillar that holds up the sky, the invisible axis upon which all turns—man's hold



on God, religion—becomes associated with prayer and smoke. Incense becomes a symbol of prayer—man's lifting up of his soul to God. And the sun is also a window. The light of the Sun streaming down upon mankind is the analogy of God's graces. The "shafts" and "beams" of light that radiate down into man's little habitation

are paralleled by the wooden "shafts" and "beams" that radiate from the central hole and hold up the roof. It is interesting to notice how full our contemporary language still is of these analogies. We still use the same words for rays of light and long straight pieces of wood (shafts, beams), just as we use such architectural terms as *dome*, *canopy*, *vault*, and *arch* to describe the blue sky over us. (See A. K. Coomaraswamy, "The Symbolism of the Dome," *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XIV., 1; March, 1938).

The Church did not take to herself and Christianize as fully as might have been expected these ancient analogies between the habitation of the individual family and that of all mankind. But many fragments of the complete analogy are part of our heritage. There is, as we have noticed, the connection of the smoke of incense with prayer. There is the construction of the dome with its circular eye and protecting lantern as a covering for the Christian altar. There is the analogy of Christ the Door, which has the authority of His own recorded words (John 10:9). It is not strange that this door-symbolism has been transferred from Christ to His Mother. In the antiphon *Ave Regina Coelorum* she is greeted as *Salve Porta*, and in that on the feast of her Purification—*Adorna*



*Thalamum*—as “*Maria, quae est coelestis Porta*,” and in the Litany of Loretto as “*janua coeli*.” (See “On the Symbolism of Holy Doors” by Dom Albert Hammenstede, O.S.B., *Orate Fratres*, June 27, 1943, Vol. XVIII, P.S.)

In the Middle Ages there was also the symbol of Christ the Window, the purveyor of light. This becomes associated with Christ the Diamond and with the stone which, rejected by the builders, was finally made head of the corner. The diamond is at once the most precious, the most hard and enduring, the most brilliant of crystals. Under the name of *adamant* the diamond was confused in the medieval mind with

the lodestone or natural magnet. The true etymology of both *diamond* and *adamant* is from *adamas*, unconquerable, in reference to its hardness, but *adamant* was then thought to be derived from *ad amans*, that which draws all things



to itself by the power of love. Add to all this that the simple crystal form of the diamond was the pyramid (the doubly terminated crystal being the diamond of our playing cards), and that the top stone of the pyramid—the *pyramidion*—is believed to be that which was placed “at the head of the corner,”



and we see the strong appeal which such analogies would have had for the medieval mind. Wynkyn de Worde (Pilgr. Perf. 183) uses the expression: “The diamonde moost precious to mankynde, thy swete sone Jesus.” It was not uncommon to place a diamond, or an object of diamond shape, at the intersection of the arms of a cross, where it took the place of the corpus of a crucifix. Associating the diamond with the window we get the diamond window, in which both the whole opening and the individual pieces of glass are lozenge shaped—very impractical, but a beautiful type of the Mystical Body.

Again there is the custom, still common in certain localities, of setting a square or oblong window cornerwise in the head of a high gable, “where the rafters join together” (See “Eckstein,” A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Speculum*, Vol. XIV, 1, January, 1939).

Perhaps most striking of all is the word chasuble, *casabula*, little house, for the mantle worn by the priest when performing his highest office. We see



the connection when we consider that the Indian teepee and the full-fashioned cloak are almost exactly the same in shape. The priest clothes himself in a sacerdotal vestment which bears the analogies of the primitive house. His head has passed through the Sun and his thinking is upon heavenly things. His anointed hands also are beyond our purely mundane habitation as they busy themselves with celestial work. Only his body remains on earth. Perhaps the mean-



ing of the word *chasuble* is so seldom explained because in a secular society like our own the implications of such symbolism might easily seem grotesque.

#### FOUR MODES OF SYMBOLISM

A SYMBOL, then, is the objectification of a metaphysical or religious concept. There seem to have been four chief ways in which men have achieved this objectification. In the first place, they have embodied the concept in actions of some sort. Such formal actions expressing religious or metaphysical meanings we call Rites or Rituals. Some kind of act is performed and the body of the idea expressed consists in this performance. Again, a fictitious narrative may be the body chosen for the incarnation of the idea, and in this case we get Myth. Myths are narrative fictions which embody deep concepts. They form a large part of traditional folklore. Or the ideas may be manifested in song, in which case we get Hymns or Chants. And, finally, there are material adjuncts to objects of a practical use. Such meaning-bearing adjuncts, completing the usefulness of an object by giving it a metaphysical as well as a physical function, are properly spoken of as Ornaments or Decorations. They are additions not of "aesthetic" but of intellectual significance.

It is instructive to notice that in our time each of these four kinds of symbolism has degenerated into a "cultural form" whose purpose is primarily not to serve God or neighbor, but to please. Our modern drama, usually frankly admitted to be intended for amusement, is the historical descendant of ritual acts. We even retain the words *act* and *performance*. Symbolic elements are sometimes to be found in the modern drama, but by and large its content is not metaphysical. Our music is also historically descended from the symbolic chant and hymn, but its function is nowadays almost universally considered to be that of giving pleasure. So also with our modern fictional literature, which occupies such an enormous part of the mental life of untold millions. As an institution it is the lineal descendant of mythology. Here too the work of the modern novelist is not without elements of metaphysical meaning, but in general these are rare and the expression is confused. The degeneracy is probably the worst in the last class, that of decorative adjuncts to useful things, where symbolic expressions have sunk to the "styles of architecture" and "fashions" in clothing, furniture, and meaningless prettification and ornamenting.

#### WHAT SYMBOLISM IS NOT

BUT all acts performed, narratives invented, songs sung and adjuncts added to useful things need not be either symbolic on the one hand or degenerate on the other. Symbolism is the expression of the deepest and most general truths, but less deep and less general truths may legitimately be expressed analogically. Thus the fables of Aesop and LaFontaine seldom rise to the level of true Myth because the ideas expressed are not sufficiently deep. Many of the negro spirituals are clearly symbolic, but many do not rise to that level. And in the same way the content of many legitimate decorations falls below it. Such are heraldic bearings, marks of personal or group ownership, etc.



The use of the names of animals for various tools and machines is an example of the same thing. These are analogies but not symbols. An iron bar whose function is to peck is called a *crow*. An instrument for butting is called a *ram*. A carpenter's *horse* has four legs and carries things on its back. And so with the *dog*, the *cat*, the *crane*, the tailor's *goose*, the gunner's *pigeon* and *cook*, and the *sow* and *pigs* of the iron smelter, and the *donkey* engine, the *caterpillar* tractor, and the *butterfly* nut. All express analogies of one sort or another which are too superficial to constitute symbolism.

Being rooted in basic and natural analogies, symbols are not products of the individual whim or fancy of particular artists and poets. They are traditional, customary, social, and, in the case of Christianity, possessions not of the members of the Church but of the Church herself. They express aspects of the *Philosophia Perennis*, and they partake of her perennial nature. Our contemporary problem is not to think up new symbols, but to try to understand those symbols that we would already possess had we not forgotten them.

When we understand that symbolism is the embodiment of fundamental abstractions and consider how little attention is given to such abstractions by the majority of people in our culture, we can easily see that much that passes for symbolism today is not symbolism at all.

An "ecclesiastical designer" can fill up empty spaces with shapes which to patrons as ignorant and indiscriminating as himself may look like symbols. He can apply to useful objects more or less apt scriptural texts. He can pepper over his work with crosses, doves, lambs, sacred hearts, angels, monograms, emblems of the evangelists, attributes of the martyrs, and what not, but he makes no symbol. In this way he can only give a spurious imitation of the effects which result from the embodiment of deep thought. The richness of a Medieval Indian temple or a Christian cathedral is thus caricatured rather than reproduced. In these cases the individual emblems he uses carry an understood meaning, but he uses them in such an improper way that they become meaningless.

Furthermore, symbolism, in the strict sense, is not what many psychologists, particularly those interested in the interpretation of dreams, mean by the word. Consciously or not, the mind is fond of analogies; and hopes, fears, angers, and other emotional states are expressed analogically in the imagery of passing dreams as well as in permanent artistic form. But *ad-equate* symbols express not emotions, but only the most fundamental of intellections.

#### CONCLUSION

We want to be good artists, and we find that the products of all arts are symbolic, the healthiest and most normal being consciously so. To make symbols we find that we must use our minds in a way to which we are not at all accustomed but which was commonplace with our Christian and pre-Christian forebears. We must think simply, deeply, cleanly. We must rigorously sweep out of our minds all "artistic" rubbish. We must be willing to get to the bottom of things, go down to the roots, dig deep into the good earth from which we came.

End of Part One

# Photography As An Art

By ANGELO ZANKL, O.S.B.

EVER since the appearance of the first daguerreotype over a hundred years ago, the question about whether photography could be considered a legitimate art medium has been warmly debated. On the one side are those who deny the dignity of an art to photography, since in their minds the mechanical and chemical processes involved loom large and occupy a dominant interest. These claim that the proper function of photography is to present a literal and factual record or documentation of the sensory world as it exists without any alteration or modification of the photographic image. On the other side are ranged the so-called "pictorialists," who claim that the task of photography is not merely to mirror the factual world of visible reality but to present a personal interpretation of this factual world, not only by a judicious selection of the factual data but also by subsequent modifications whenever they are necessary to complete the art message.

The underlying cause of this wide cleavage of viewpoint and of the resulting perennial debate is traceable to those who snobbishly understand the word *art* in a very narrow sense, restricting its application to the so-called *fine arts*—static and dynamic—of painting, sculpture, architecture, music, poetry, and drama. These forget that art is in reality but another kind of language with which to express ideas, that its primary purpose is to express these ideas by means of sensory stimuli, and that the nobler art (in whatever medium happens to be employed) is an attempt to express the ineffable, the unspeakable, the suprasensitive in terms of the effable, the concrete, and the tangible. It is in this sense that art is truly creative only in as far as it interprets and not merely mirrors or imitates reality.

There is, however, an inherent drawback in photography as an art medium which is immediately apparent when we reflect that it presents to the practitioner a fatal facility and ease for the mechanical reproduction of the sensory world of surface reality, the empirical and the concrete rather than the ideal and universal. Unless therefore a constant, conscious control is exercised in every phase of the process with a view to interpret, to universalize, no great art will ever be produced by photographic means, and the failure to apply this constant, rigid control on the part of the photographic practitioners is the reason for the astonishingly rare examples of true art in the hundred years of photography behind us. Instead of creating works that endure the medium has thus prostituted itself to producing à grist of tons upon tons of photographic trivia, daily ground out by the press and cinema, the amateur, and even the professional practitioner.

In spite of the above mentioned drawback it must be admitted that photography can truly serve as a legitimate art medium; in fact, the pictorialist has the better side of the argument if we remember that each art medium has



its specific inherent excellencies and limitations and that each medium demands different kinds of skills which cannot be compared. Thus photography possesses one inherent excellence not possessed by any other two-dimensional graphic medium—the ability to record an endless, almost infinite number of delicately graded tones in the range from pure white to black (see Fig. 4, gallery page 19). Coupled with this excellency is an inherent limitation: in the case of prints, the total scale or range in which these tones can be reproduced is greatly restricted to a scale of about 30 to 1 in the tones from pure white to black. This constitutes one of the major limitations of photography. But this scale may be widened considerably in the use of transparencies, where transmitted instead of reflected light is employed as a medium of visibility. Since the average brightness scale of paper ranges between 30 to 1 from white to black, and between 130 to 1 in a transparency, the real limitation of photography becomes apparent when compared with the enormous range to which the human eye is able to adapt itself, which is in the neighborhood of 1500 to 1!

Besides its inherent excellency and limitations, photography as an art demands as great skills of its practitioners as of any who employ brush and palette, hammer and chisel, needle and thread, or bow and string as instruments to express ideas. For photography demands a working knowledge of the laws of optics and the nature and function of light, plus a practical knowledge of chemistry. Moreover, just as constant control and modification are the essentials of technique in the other art-media, so also in photography there is demanded a working knowledge and application of the various methods of control both before and after the shutter is released to raise it to the dignity of an art, since constant control is essential to all art. Obviously this will rule out as photographic artists the millions of snapshooters who bang away aimlessly, then carry their rolls to the corner drugstore to have their impulses visualized for them by a commercial concern aptly called a "finisher."

The rarity of true art in photography must surely be blamed in part upon the curse of commercialism which has made photography facile and effortless and has destroyed the need for skill. It is this same curse of commercialism which in stimulating the fever of "gadget-ism" has even dried up the essential of art—that of vision—and has substituted an absorbing interest in and a craving for ever newer and more gadgets in the photographic field. Imagine the output of a painter preoccupied with ever new brushes or pigments, or of a musician whose overwhelming concern is devoted to the new horsehair on his bow!

Given then the inherent excellence of photography in producing an image of many delicate half tones; given, too, its limitation of confining these within a narrow and limited scale—how are we to go about creating a true work of art by photographic means? Obviously we must first have something to say, for an artist must be a *metaphysician* primarily and only secondarily a technician, one whose principal aim is to go beyond surface reality into the realm of the abstract and universal—one from whom the impact of sensory stimuli elicits an interpretation. In addition, there are the fundamental canons of the graphic arts to be observed—compositional principles, laws of balance, unity,

principality and dominance of subject, symmetry, rhythm—and all these must be observed as religiously in photography as in any of the other graphic arts. The subject matter must also have a perennial and universal interest rather than a local or personal appeal, for this is the test of greatness in photography as in the other arts.

Light is the photographer's basic tool and therefore is the principal subject of control and modification. The Germans call a photograph a *Licht-bild*, a picture formed by light, thus designating the instrumental cause. In the history of painting, to which photography is closely allied, there are two basically differing approaches to the representation of a subject on a two-dimensional surface, the Static and the Dynamic.

### THE STATIC AND DYNAMIC APPROACH

The Static approach presents the subject in terms of flat tones and outlines and has few shadows. The modeling is not sculpturesque and seems to be suggested only; it presents broad masses, the tonal gradations being limited so that the entire effect is that of pattern or design on a two-dimensional surface rather than the illusion of three dimensions or perspective. The Static is the most logical and consistent treatment of any flat surface upon which we work and was the dominant method of artists through the Egyptian, the Byzantine, and the medieval eras up to the late renaissance. It imitates the qualities of "linearism," and is best illustrated by the works of the so-called primitives, from Giotto till the time of Botticelli. As a result of the fundamental honesty of not trying to create the illusion of three dimensions on a two-dimensional medium, the effect of such art is generally static and tranquil, serene, formal, classical, ideal, and ethereal. It produces the enduring repose and tranquility, the balance and peace that belong to noble subjects (see Fig. 1, gallery page 17). In this manner of presentation light is used simply as a condition of visibility, as a means of discovering an image of beautiful pattern and outline, and not in any way attracting attention to itself.

Opposed to the Static approach is the Dynamic approach. Its aim is to produce the illusion of three dimensions on a two-dimensional surface, and therefore its use requires all the tricks which will produce such an illusion; e.g., the use of strong lighting, the presentation of the subject in great contrast by means of sharp highlights and dense shadows to give the impression of strong modeling, sculpturesque relief, and realistic perspective (see Fig. 2, gallery page 18). Such painters of the renaissance period as Rembrandt, Van Dyck, Tintoretto, *et al*, favored this approach to the art of graphic representation. With them light and the play of light upon a subject became almost a theme in itself rather than simply the condition for seeing, as it was with the primitives.

The Dynamic approach described above is typically a manner of our sensate age, since such an approach to a subject emphasizes the accidental, fleeting, and ephemeral aspects of it, and is suited to the turbulent, the moody, the active and the restless rather than to passive and serene subjects. Its use

(Please turn to page 20)





*Fig. 1. 35 mm. camera. Slight modifications achieved by use of enlarged paper negative and crayon sauce. This print illustrates two-dimensional basic lighting. By Angelo Zankl, O.S.B.*



*Fig. 2. 35 mm. camera—bromide enlargement. Control was exercised by dodging and "printing in" areas. The print illustrates three-dimensional lighting. By Angelo Zankl, O.S.B.*

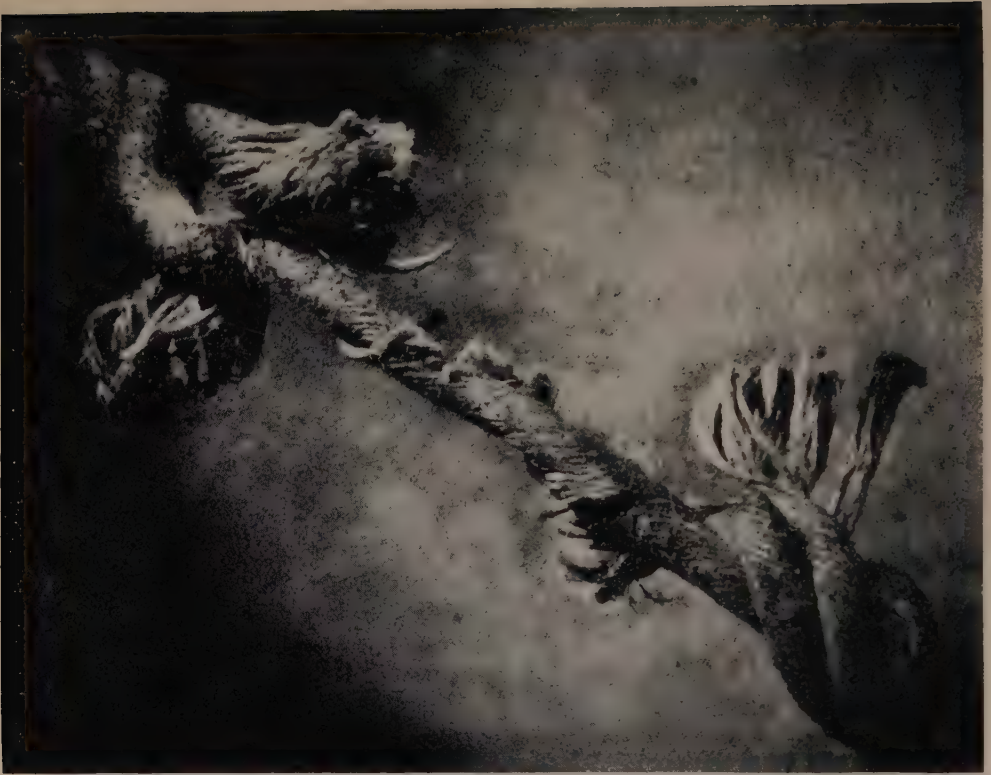


*Fig. 3. 35 mm. camera—bromide enlargement. Illustrates broad masses, restricted tonal scale. By C. L. and M. M. Haines.*





*Fig. 4. 35 mm. camera—straight bromide enlargement. Illustrating the unique excellence of photography in reproducing a great number of delicately graded halftones between pure white (the mountains) and black (the stream). By C. L. and M. M. Haines.*



### SABOTAGE

*Fig. 5. Bromoil Process. By John Fardon, Institutum Divi Thomae, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

began with the exaggerated interest in perspective at the time of the renaissance. We say "exaggerated," for perspective was not a creation of the renaissance, since it has been known before; but it is significant that the realistic chiaroscuro treatment and preoccupation with perspective followed upon the decline of the idealistic era of the medieval primitives and their more logical, rational, direct, and symbolical use of the two-dimensional method of approach.

HAVING therefore decided upon the basic lighting method best suited to the statement of our idea—whether it is to be essentially two-dimensional, favoring the drawing and beauty of outline and flat masses, or the more energetic treatment of a three-dimensional illusion, there follows the control of the technical processes necessary to record our idea: placing the camera, focusing, selecting the proper stop to control the volume of light and the depth of focus wanted, determining the shutter speed, choosing the type of light-sensitive emulsion best suited to the subject, and a host of other technical minutiae.



The so-called "after-processes" must also be the object of constant control, for when one first hopefully fishes his negative out of the developer he will find that all the care and control exercised before the shutter was tripped were still inadequate. Unless one belongs to the purist group, the "f.64" school, he will not be content to leave on the picture everything the needle-sharp anastigmat has faithfully recorded with such life-like fidelity and absolute realism. There will be the "damned spot" on the lady's dress, the ubiquitous telephone poles and wires in the pastoral idyll, or the distressing and meaningless blobs of light in the background, all of which interfere with the *great* thing one wants to say. The unwanted detail must therefore be removed or modified.

There are numerous technical methods by which this control may be exercised, some on the negative, some on the intermediate or final prints. However, the elimination of unwanted details and the addition of desirable features is not the only control possible; there is also the possibility of control through the deliberate lengthening or shortening of the tonal values in the negative or the positive by the retouching of areas in the negative, the addition of opaque or the local reduction of the negative. Other possibilities are darkening by additional printing-in of areas, or lightening by holding back in the enlargement, the device of combination or double printing. Then there is the marvelous control possible by making enlarged paper negatives and modifying them, and finally that most flexible of all means, the bromoil inked print (see Fig. 4, gallery page 20). All these enable the photographer to control the final product, the picture, in such a way that that as far as technique is concerned photography is raised above the level of a mere photo-chemical process to that of an art.

It will be apparent that photography may serve as a true art medium just as well as does painting or any other medium. In fact, painting and photography are closely allied, since their mutual problems, though not identical, are very similar. And if the aim of all true art is not the mere recording of the visible world but rather the interpretation of it, then the practice of photography as outlined above truly becomes an art. Understanding its inherent excellencies and innate limitations and adapting himself to make the best of each, the photographer who has something worthwhile to say will be able to produce a technically perfect product which is also a work of art.

# Defense Of Needlework

By MARTHA GENUNG STEARNS

*"The Catholic Liturgy was not composed by divines working under instructions to complete their labours by a given date. The liturgy was long in the building, longer than the cathedrals which attempted to express in stone what the Mass expresses in words, and, like those cathedrals, the Mass enshrines the thought of its first architects in a structure which has received the imprint of many minds..."*

*From "Within That City," by Arnold Lunn.*

HISTORY has come down to us recorded in many forms: not only on the lettered page and by characters incised in stone, but in all kinds of creative work. By the Great Wall of China, the Pyramids, the vast network of roads which held the Roman Empire together, by great buildings and aqueducts, we measure the growth and development of the mind of man, breaking out of his own small environment and reaching out toward other minds, and the acquaintanceship of nations and the enlargement of their life. The record reaches us not only through these great monuments built by the lifting of heavy weights and the straining muscles of men and beasts; there are all the small things made by the intense and minute application of sensitive fingers, and things still more crude and simple. Along with the slow building up of the records by whatever alphabet, there is a parallel history which is called tradition, no less precious, to which countless minds have contributed; and in the interplay of mind and hand and tool this most intimate and personal record is clearly to be seen.

In the structure of the church or cathedral, as in the liturgy of the Mass, it is the altar which is the center and the core. The long, converging lines of the nave, the hovering figures in their archaic glowing vestments, the richness of light and color and decoration are all intended to focus our attention on that Throne. This was the purpose of the architects and builders and of every artisan who contributed to the final expression, not only of artistic and dramatic effect but of worship itself. Added to this were the gifts from devotees who brought all sorts of human motives into play: their petitions, contrition, vows fulfilled, offerings of love and devotion—the thoughts that are too big for words and must be expressed in actions. Whether or not a man could read and write, he could add to the mass of tradition and make his imprint.

Tracing back into the Old Testament we learn that needlework and decorated textiles have always been a major art of the Church—until now. During the mediaeval times when the Church was the great central factor in life, her personages and feasts and fasts provided a perpetual theme. There have been noted needlewomen who wore crowns and were historic and saintly figures, and there have been countless others who left no name behind them unless, perhaps, they embroidered it into a border. Exquisite work has always been done in convents, and children learning to sew have added their bit. The



women were eternally busy, even when there were plenty of slaves and servants, for their hands were habituated to industry. Their work was used not only for the common needs of their households but also for the beautifying of the greatest shrines. Some of their works have become historic documents, such as the Bayeux Tapestry with the wealth of detail in its simple but telling stitches. Many pieces bore the names of donors to a shrine or to a great church; many bear a humble request for prayers from the beholder, as a grave-stone may do.

A strange linen frontal in the Vatican treasury has a kingly theme, almost a pre-figure of our new feast of Christ the King. We can identify the figures of Nero, Pilate and Herod, turning away from the King of Kings; across one end at our Lady's feet kneel the three Kings of the Epiphany, with a still smaller figure of the maker, with this legend: IHESU BENIGNE OPUS NOSTRUM SIT ACCEPTABILE.

Lavish use of embroidery was made when all the participants in some great ceremony or a long procession were vested in copes, fifty or more. There were complete sets in the several liturgical colors for all sorts of great functions on different feasts, multiplied many times; there were cushions and baldachins for notable weddings, cloths of estate for coronations, funeral palls. The patient work of years would go into one of these great pieces; sometimes several women sat together working on different parts of the embroidery frame.

The elements and the methods of the crafts are so simple; some of them have come down to us practically unchanged from the first—the handful of clay on the potter's wheel, the weaver's loom with its flying shuttleful of thread. Nothing could be simpler than a piece of fabric, a needle and thread, and yet these things in the hands of women have created a great tangible wealth of which we can judge by the wonderful examples still in existence in museums and collections; or through ancient inventories and wills and the records of church treasuries.

The work grew stitch by stitch, in small strokes comparable to the etching of a fine pen. The discipline of the mind endowing some small monotonous action with meaning, giving it a theme, and carrying it to a conclusion which becomes important, even triumphant, can express the deepest feeling, the most intense emotion if need be. As we examine that wonderful example of needlework, the Syon Cope, and discover that its heavy silken texture is in reality a mass of tiny intricate stitches of silk built up on a linen foundation so as to hide it completely, we can realize the drama in the mastery of simple things, and remember that there once was David, choosing him five smooth stones from the brook, and changing history.

WHEN these great handwrought fabrics into which so much time, so many thoughts, prayers, and intentions had been sewn, were tragically destroyed during the Reformation, there passed the last of the regal stately spectacles of old. Since then ecclesiastical needlework in its highest beauty declined, and today it has practically disappeared from our churches. If we ask why, the question is easy to answer. Needlework is a slow, meditative

art, progressing one stitch at a time, which does not fit in with our modern life. No one has the courage to embark on a piece of work that might take a year or more to finish. Modern hands have lost their skill, and vestments can be bought ready made, with a few touches of braid or galloon and a woven monogram. The younger women with the keener eyesight have far too much to fill their days. And, speaking generally, our religion is no longer the dominating subject of our thoughts and lives on weekdays.

It seems, therefore, as if possibilities worthy of revival have slipped away from us which could make a great contribution to the liturgical beauty of our churches. In the shadowy interior of a church, against the dark mass of stone and wood, color can be provided by mosaic and enamel, colored glass and rich hangings. But of all these, the fabrics alone are capable of movement and the semblance of life in their constantly shifting lights and shades. Nothing is so serenely graceful as hanging folds of deep-colored stuff with their lines of shadow. With the encrusting of the surface with multicolored stitches and gold thread, an indescribable richness and beauty is added. Then too, the changing colors of the Church's year can be so expressive, the tranquil blue which is our Lady's own color, the suggestive violence of red, the sombre purple and black of mourning. In the remnants of liturgical fabrics which we now see, so much of the design is weak. This is no place for inept naturalistic flowers and uninteresting stitchery; in the great dictionary of stitches alone lies a wealth of possibilities.

With the slackening of creative handwork, whether we realize it or not, something vital has gone out of our lives; with the breaking of that elemental alliance of mind, eye, and hand we are the losers in more ways than one. On the physical side alone a release from nervous tension can be effected with the small, familiar act of placing stitches. If we used the time presumably saved by all our speedy methods and our mechanical labor-savers to create something of lasting value out of materials so easily at hand, we should be leaving behind us in our turn a record of our generation which can never be filled in by anyone else. The question will obtrude itself—haven't we anything to say?

Perhaps the day of church embroidery is forever gone. It was preeminently a manifestation of those ages of faith along with the crusades, the Gothic inspiration, the great pilgrimages, which arose, simple and childlike, out of something burning hot in the soul. We in this day could never go back to the mediaeval designs, dramatic and symbolical as they were. We should write today with a very different alphabet.

But so many strange things have grown out of unforeseen events. The new discipline of war and of sorrow, the turning inward of our regard upon our own souls again—who knows?



# Dante--Happiness And Art

By DUNSTAN TUCKER, O.S.B.

THE importance Dante attaches to happiness as an educational aim is tremendous. "Wherefore," he writes, "since happiness is our final resting place, for the sake of which we live and employ ourselves in all that we do, it is most useful and necessary to perceive this mark in order to direct towards it the bow of our activity" (*Convivio* IV, 22).

The most essential and the first in the hierarchy of all human activities, he tells us, is reasoning on the aims of life: "And does not a man part with the use of reason when he does not reason on the aims of life! And does he not part with the use of reason when he fails to reason on the path he ought to take? Certainly he does" (*Convivio* IV, 7). The man who does not reflect on this particular point, he tells us, "is dead as a man, but survives as a beast."

If there is anything certain in this age when most things beyond material knowledge are considered conjecture it is this, that modern educators will cry out with one voice that this talking about happiness in the Dantean sense is religion, not education. Education, they will protest, has to do with scholarship and scientific investigation, not with happiness. "Happiness! Let happiness take care of itself." Dante was a great scholar, they will admit, but a scholar in spite of, not because of, the age in which he lived and the faith he professed. Men of that time, they will say, centered their whole attention and hope on a happiness to be found in a heaven of bliss which was to compensate for the lack of a normal, intelligent life on earth. They will say that Dante and the Middle Ages are no guides for us today, that Dante is an astoundingly interesting phenomenon, but hardly a guide for an enlightened world from which the night of ignorance and superstition has been lifted.

To these cries we may lend an amused ear. Dante had, in a correct way, of course, perhaps an earthier ideal of human enjoyment and happiness than some of the classical philosophers. A cultivated mind, manual accomplishments, a beautiful body, strength and agility of limb, courtesy of speech and gentleness of manner were to Dante things to be fostered and attained. Facts, moreover, were as necessary to him for correct thinking as water is for swimming and food for chewing. He had what we know as the well-stocked mind, and appreciated factual knowledge with a passion the most confirmed materialist of our time can rarely match. He was, in truth, a superior sort of research scholar, a creative artist and born teacher who set himself to the task of determining for mankind the nature of happiness and of writing in the *Divine Comedy* the doctrine that would teach men the way to peace. His was the intellectual thirst of the true thinker, to whom one draught leads to desire for another, and so on *ad infinitum*.

Far from being a facile acceptor of authoritative statements, Dante was a rigid investigator. Was Aristotle correct, he asks, when he states that all men

naturally desire to have knowledge? The reason, he agrees, is that everything seeks its own perfection, and since knowledge is the final perfection of the soul, "all men are naturally subject to a desire for it" (*Convivio* I, 1). But why should all things tend to seek their own perfection? Why should men seek knowledge as their perfection? What is the universe, and why was it created? Why was man created with a soul that desires eternal life? What knowledge brings a partial and imperfect happiness, which a perfect and complete happiness? What is the purpose of art? And is a knowledge perfective of man if it alienates him from God, or denies that there is a purpose in creation to which man must conform?—I do not pretend to circumscribe the scope of Dante's reasoning; I am merely stating some of the many questions he proposes, the answers to which he has left in his writings for our enlightenment.

He thus opens the *De Monarchia* on the duty of the teacher, to the men of his time and to posterity: "It would seem that all men on whom the higher nature has stamped the love of truth must make it their chief concern . . . to toil in advance for those who shall come hereafter, that posterity may have of them whereby to be enriched. For he who, himself imbued with public teachings, yet cares not to contribute aught to the public good, may well be assured that he hath fallen far from duty; for he is not a "tree by the streams of water, bearing its fruit in due season; but rather a devouring whirlpool, ever sucking in and never pouring back what it hath swallowed. Wherefore . . . I long not only to blossom forth, but also to bear fruit for the public advantage and to set forth truth unattempted by others."

The amount of study Dante put to a task, every scholar will admit, was prodigious. But study was only a part of the work; prayer and fasting were contributing factors. In Canto 25 of the *Paradiso* he tells us, "the sacred poem to which heaven and earth hath set hand . . . hath made me lean for many a year" (to which Benvenuto da Imola, one of the earliest commentators, says grimly: "Do not wonder, Reader . . . for the same has happened to me in explaining it"). "By *heaven*," continues Benvenuto, "we are to understand the grace of God through which the influence of heaven had made him fit for the work . . . by *earth*, human study and vigils, both of soul and body, for in the composition of this most high work he studied late and fasted."

What did Dante study? The *omne scibile* of the time, Holy Scripture, Theology, Philosophy, Art, Astronomy, Physics—every branch of knowledge then known and every writing he could get his hand on. To deny Dante's credentials is to assume the role of the pigmy in attacking a giant, for to him were given unparalleled gifts of insight, the knowledge, and the native instincts of the born teacher. This man, to whom the stars had given talent and God grace, to use Grandgent's phrase, set a powerful mind to the task of ascertaining for posterity the correct answer to the most vital of all human problems, the question of human happiness, what happiness is and how man should go about attaining it. And this, we say, is the answer to the problem of education, for the solution of which Dante sought replies in the writings of all the sages of the past, in Divine Revelation, in the teaching of the Church, in the writing of his contemporaries, in the art of the time, and in his own ex-



perience. No mere theory would suffice. He must know the actual world as it is in fact and not in hypothesis, and it was only after certainty was reached that he presumed to instruct others.

Education as Dante knew it was very much a matter of living. Why should a man or woman be educated if not for a happy life? Books are but an aid to truth, inasmuch as they record the views of wise men regarding life. He was also an apostle of truth, and hence this student of Aristotle and Virgil, St. Thomas, the Scriptures, and all the writers whose works were available to him broke open the shell of shams and superficialities and exposed in the *Divine Comedy* the moral and political corruptions of the day with the intention of showing how they lead to unhappiness and a bad end. But he was not merely an observer and critic of great doings. He was a creator. He had the sympathetic eye of the artist, the appreciation of the farmer for young growing things—lambs and young goats and sprouting grain—the eye of the hawker and hunter, the mountain climber and the worker in the ship yards. He had watched dicers at play, had fought in battle and killed his man. And—rather violently—he says he was ready to answer insult with the dagger.

The value of Dante as a guide for us Catholics today in the confusions in which education finds itself is that he himself was one of the best educated men of all times and also one of the world's great artists who knew by experience what an education is and what it must aim at. He starts where education should start, namely, with the end of man. "It is the intention of God," he writes, "that every creature should present the divine likeness," each in its own way. But the first man sinned. Created in the image and likeness of God he lost that likeness, and therefore "it was decreed in that loftiest and most united divine consistory of the Trinity that the Son of God should descend to earth" (*Convivio* IV, 5). Heaven is man's final home. Earth is his temporary abode—nevertheless a *home*—to the adorning and ordering of which each man must lend a hand.

Coming closer to what happiness consists of in the concrete, in the *De Monarchia* Dante writes: "That unutterable Providence, then, has set two ends before man to be contemplated by him: the happiness of this life which consists in the exercise of his proper powers (i.e. reason in speculation, doing, and making). . . and the happiness of eternal life which consists in the enjoyment of the divine aspect, to which his human power may not ascend unless assisted by the divine light." He adds, ". . . to the first we attain by the teaching of philosophy, following it by acting in accordance with the moral and intellectual virtues; to the second we attain by spiritual teachings which transcend human reason, as we follow them by acting according to the theological virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity" (*De Monarchia* III, 26).

Let us now look more closely at the happiness of man *which consists in the exercise of his proper powers*. In saying that the exercise of the intellectual and moral virtues constitute happiness on earth, Dante does not mean that man is happy merely by knowing and acting virtuously. Knowledge does not exist for itself. Dante does not ignore the Gospel saying that man must work for a living, that he must make. With St. Thomas he held that happiness consists in

activity. The happy life is not one of idle thought and speculation, though its highest act is contemplation. "The intellectual faculty of which I am speaking," he says, "deals not only with universal forms, but also with particular forms. Whence it is said that the speculative intellect becomes the practical intellect, the end of which is doing and making. And I draw this distinction because there are things to be done which are regulated by political wisdom, and things to be made which are done by art, but they are alike the handmaids of speculation, as the supreme function for which the Prime Excellence brought the human race into existence" (*De Monarchia* I, 3).

Dante was a true realist. Education in his view should aim at the harmonious development of practical as well as speculative powers: powers of imagination for the conceiving of forms, powers of reasoning for the right shaping of these forms, powers of skill for ease in shaping them, powers of enterprise and observation for the avoidance of stagnation and mental sterility. To Dante the arts, whether they served higher or lower needs—spiritual needs, as does religious art, or material needs, as does farming—were all human activities included within the scope of the rational life. In a simple common-sensed acceptance of human necessities, Dante did not think the "artist" who serve the needs of the body was in any way socially inferior, as artist, to the one who served the needs of the spirit. The artist owes his genius to the stars, Dante said, but his art he owes to himself—to his hard work. With St. Thomas Dante said that the arts differ from one another because of their ends. It would require a different art—therefore a different reasoning—for the building of cathedrals than for the making of bottle caps, but hardly a different kind of man. And in every case, since farmer, builder, poet or painter are human beings, all must with equal persistence cultivate the desire for the good, the true, and the beautiful, the possession of which makes up the essence of happiness for all men alike. And each man, having found the permanently good and true things in life, is duty-bound to create. Dante could never have conceived the desiring of knowledge for the sake of possessing knowledge for oneself only, or of art for the sake of the art only, as in any way virtuous or creditable. The possession of knowledge and art involves the duty of communicating truth and beauty to others. Ulysses, who sought knowledge for the mere sake of knowing and for the power it gave him over his fellowmen, Dante punishes in hell. In Dante's view of education man desires knowledge and art so that he may get to know God better. And hence education does not cease at the age of twenty or thirty or fifty. The completion of education is the knowledge of God—All-Truth, All-Good, All-Beauty—in the Beatific Vision. And in the interim his duty is to help in the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth through the use of his speculative and practical faculties.

Our students will be happier men and women if we fit their faculties to be willing tools in the life-long search for truth and beauty. To cloy the appetite and parch the brain with an education which fits them for books only and not for a happy creative life is not education.

CATHOLIC education has made great strides, it is true, but it still has far to go even to touch the hem of Dante's garment. We have not in recent years



fully believed in our own educational traditions. How else is one to account for the apparent junking of an ideal which insisted that one of the objects of education is to liberalize the mind by making it germinal of idea and form, which later are to blossom forth in all sorts of creative activity, in social life and in art as well as in scholarship. We are showering praise on a group of educators outside the Catholic fold who in many ways have revived our own timid faith in an educational tradition we inherited from classical antiquity and the best ages of the Church. We have much to thank them for, but one is of the opinion that our own masters, men of the type of St. Thomas and Dante who are literally the creation of the Holy Spirit and born in the womb of the Church, are our better guides. Catholic education has the purpose of making rational beings not only more rational but also more desirous to be perfect in a supernatural as well as in a natural way—to be like unto God. That is why the vision of a man such as Dante is necessary in a time when we have lost the feeling for a genuinely Christian civilization.

It is not an exaggeration to say that in paying too much attention to secular standards we have to a marked extent lost sight of this whole man in our teaching if not in our theories about teaching. We have, for example, at least partly dissociated religion from education inasmuch as it is no longer one of the subjects for which we demand the same exact knowledge in examinations as for secular subjects. We have also underestimated the task we have undertaken. The education of the whole man is a complicated process demanding the best and the highest type of teaching, and possibly more time than we have sometimes put to it. Too often we have satisfied our obligation by inserting in the school bulletin an eloquent preface outlining the ends of Catholic education, leaving the preface and the Holy Ghost to do the rest.

Naturally it would be absurd to dismiss thus summarily all that Catholic education has accomplished in America. We would, for example, be blind to an evident fact if we failed to recognize the influence we have exerted on the Hutchins-Adler school of thought. Catholic education has indeed done much, but it has not yet done enough. Like the secular education it has emulated, it has too often in the very recent past looked at a student body as one vast capacious maw into which to stuff all things and sundry, hay and weeds and dead lumber as well as digestible human food. In supplying information we have neglected to develop the creative faculties. In our examinations we have been checking on absorptive powers, not on creative powers. Through the urbanization of our curriculum and emphasis on text books we have failed to train the imagination and the sensory equipment of our students, with the result that they have come more and more to trust what they hear and read rather than what they see and think. And in those cases where we have educated well we have not always stimulated our graduates to give back of their abundance. They are literally what Dante calls those who fail in their social duty: "a devouring whirlpool ever sucking in and never pouring back what it hath swallowed." Few teachers seem to think that possibly in the groups before them there can be another Dante, or a Giotto, one who might long "not only to blossom forth, but also to bear fruit for the public advantage and

to set forth truth unattempted by others"—or that one of these fruits should be a Catholic art. And since we ourselves have been so remiss, it should not surprise us too much that the world of today is secularized and out of contact with the heart of man, with the fauna and flora of our country, and has lost the Christian heritage of awe and wonder before God and creation.

Is the need of the day for a pruning from our curriculums of dead lumber courses and a return to the more basic things which are constructive and productive of happiness? Doubtless. But there is less need of these changes than for self appraisal so that we may realize what we have lost. We need on our teaching staffs the best and the most creative-thinking minds, men and women who are at least as much interested in society and the happiness of their pupils as they are in their own fields of study. We need teachers who see the workers of the future in their students, beings of the same nature as the great thinkers and artists of the past, tagged with different names, encased in different shells, and endowed with slightly—only slightly—different personalities. Then, finally, when we have arrived at a just concept of the Christlike character and the true Christian we will realize that teaching is creative work of a special kind—that a student is not a block of wood to be hewed to a certain shape, but a free rational creature who must be shown the shape to which he must mold himself.

And here is apparent the difference between a Catholic concept of education and all others: that it has as an ideal the attainment of supernatural perfection. It aims at the development of the intellect and the lower faculties of the student, but basic to this is the job which every student must himself assume of cultivating the supernatural possibilities of the soul. The end of man as outlined by Christ in the Gospels and the end of Catholic education are one and the same. It cannot be asking too much of the Catholic school, therefore, to make it clear to students that their work in life is the restoration in themselves and others, as far as it is possible in the present order, of that original harmony of all the faculties which prevailed in the life of the first man: the submission, through grace, of the mind to God, the submission of the inferior faculties to the will, and the obedience of the senses to the dictates of reason.

When the full implication of the above ideal is realized by our Catholic teachers and students we will begin to have a genuinely Catholic art. A Faculty to which the Christian Faith and Christian culture are real things can make our students desire the "sweetness of human happiness" (*Convivio* IV, 22) which comes from creative activity and virtuous living. And from this happiness will spring the art which has always accompanied every great religious rebirth in the Church's history. It matters little that we are working with weakened and rebellious faculties, a darkened intellect and a feeble will; God has not left man to his own devices. Life becomes a glorious adventure with happiness as its prize. Grace and those seven supernatural gifts of the Holy Ghost which Dante calls the "seed" of the supernatural life have been given to supplement our natural powers for the tremendous vision of a thoroughly Christian world: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Strength, Knowl-



edge, Piety, and the Fear of the Lord. "O excellent crop!" Dante cries, "O excellent and wonderful seed! O admirable and gracious Sower, who waitest only for human nature to prepare the ground to be sown! How blest are they who duly cultivate this seed" (*Convivio* IV, 21). Given confidence in God's help and the vision of the world that is possible, our students can become enthusiastic about true happiness and seek it as energetically as the racer who runs for the prize.

DA versus CAA

"COMPLIMENTS should be handed out sparingly lest they devalue. But I can't spare any of mine in congratulating you on the good work you are doing through the Catholic Art Association. I admire its deep and comprehensive philosophy, and rejoice to find so many tenets there which I hold and have held myself—just because they are Catholic in foundation."

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"The Michaelmas issue was okey. I enjoyed the Cuda and Bethune articles. I am glad they got into the book. If a series of such things were run in succeeding issues it might get me down, however. A light or humorous relief is a help. I'm just not convinced that it was sufficiently impossible to get a ready made washboard to justify a day's labor, or that two or more generations could use the same washboard. The ones sold in hardware stores are too cheap and too satisfactory."

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"The Cuda-Bethune article will be taken for what it is worth. Too bad so much joyous making had the misfortune to result in the making of things so easily acquired elsewhere. . . .Albert Hammenstede is wonderful in the first movement. I couldn't get through the second. Lee Bowen—as usual— and Lethaby! I appreciated the Maritain article, though it came too late to do me any good. . . .I thought I recognized some of Father Catich's symbols, but pages 12 and 30 certainly aren't his."

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"The Miss Cuda and Ade Bethune articles were splendid breaks in a rather heavy diet. Miss Bethune's crib is not a work of art, but she herself says it isn't. I think you might quote a few lines from Maisie Ward's *Gilbert Keith Chesterton* about homes. They are on page 99." (The editor complies.) "I have sometimes thought it would be very fine to take an ordinary house, a very poor commonplace house in West Kensington, say, and make it symbolic. Not artistic—Heaven—O Heaven forbid. My blood boils when I think of the affronts put by knock-kneed pictorial epicures on the strong, honest, ugly patient shapes of necessary things: the brave old bones of life. There are aes-

thectic prigs who can look at a saucepan without one tear of joy or sadness: mongrel decadents that can see no dignity in the honorable scars of a kettle. So they concentrate all their household decoration on colored windows that nobody looks out of, and vases of lilies that everybody wishes out of the way. No: my idea (which is much cheaper) is to make a house really *allegoric*: really explain its own essential meaning. Mystical or ancient sayings should be inscribed on every object, the more prosaic the better; and the more coarsely and rudely the inscription was traced the better. 'Hast thou sent the Rain upon the Earth?' should be inscribed on the Umbrella stand: perhaps on the umbrella. 'Even the Hairs of your Head are numbered' would give a tremendous significance to one's hairbrushes: the words about the 'living waters' should reveal the music and sanctity of the sink: while 'Our God is a consuming Fire' might be written over the kitchen grate to assist the mystic musings of the cook." (From an early letter of Chesterton to his future wife.)

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"The CAA will be what you feed it. To be specific: you have a news column but if that news were evaluated, as artists take it, some of the items would be 'way off. . . . The tardy recognition of Lauren Ford was a sad affair. To get Emil Frei on the same page with notice of a Connick show was a real contradiction in terms, as art Hoyle goes. Naturally, these are fine points, but that is where I am sure you want to be right—most right."

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"The Quarterly was getting better 'n' better with each issue—but this last had nary a pitcher! I missed them sorely. I guess I'm just a horrible consequence of life, and look and pick even though I don't indulge."

"Will the DA appear in the Christmas issue?"

"Will there be a gallery in the Christmas issue?"

"You ask for a critical comment on the symbols in the Michaelmas issue. Tell me first who made them."

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"Even though the schools . . . cry for attention and are sick enough patients, I still think they do not cry for the right medicine. . . . I'm yet to find teachers who didn't peddle tricks and call them "techniques." And I also maintain that the term "school art" is phoney. I concede that certain skills may be considered for grade schools but if we really stick to the scholastic definition of art how can we call it art when minds are still intellectually undeveloped and muscles still too young for the fine coordination that means true skill? Art is too strong a term for school use. I do so heartily agree with Gill and his attitude toward art education. . . . I am distressed to find the regionals going so all out for grade school talk. I know it is necessary, but I maintain that too few put on the real pressure."

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"Why do art teachers all want to be called 'professionals'. Isn't the teaching *profession* honorable enough?"



# Henri Focillon

By M. A. COUTURIER, O.P.

I HAVE felt greatly honored in being asked to speak here, in the name of modern artists, about my old friend Professor Focillon's attitude to the efforts and achievements of modern art. You all know the instinctive mistrust artists, and in particular modern artists, have for those they call Intellectuals—professors and men of letters. "Men of Letters explain the arts without understanding them," said Degas. This pertinent or impertinent observation of a very great painter might appear only a whimsicality were it not that we recognize in it a sorry truth, a probing into our spiritual infirmities—the powerlessness of the mind to express in ideas the intimate beauty, the singular beauty of a work or of a natural object which our senses, our eyes, our ears, our hands effortlessly and faithfully grasp.

Two painters are chatting. I mean, of course, two real painters. Do you think they are talking about the doctrine, the theory, or even the inspiration of beauty? Not at all! They are talking about their *metier*, their trade, and about the most concrete and material aspects of this *metier*. How wonderful it is to listen to them! For hours on end, without ever tiring, without ever finishing, their theme is painting. Just so would two carpenters discuss carpentry, two farmers standing before their farm houses speak of farming. Never raising their voices, never changing the tenor of their thoughts, with half utterances they understand each other. With infinite patience and boundless love they go over the same things again and again. For they know those very things are inexhaustible, full of mystery—the consistency of a temper and the texture of a canvas, the manner of putting this temper on that canvas, the strength of a line, the rightness of a tone, the quality of a gray next to a white—.

In these interminable "shop talks" Focillon could readily join. He had a great respect for craftsmen, for people with a *metier*. With them he understood the unfathomable mystery in the heart of the most simple, material realities. He understood those who loved such things and made them with their hands. He was himself the son of an engraver. He knew the proper depth of an etching, and the difference in the blacks obtained from zinc or copper, from dry point or from nitric acid. One of his most beautiful writings is called *Eloge de la Main* ("Praise of the Hand") which he begins in this way: "I am undertaking this eulogy of the hand as one would perform a service for a friend. At the very moment in which I begin to write it I am looking at my own, which importune and beguile my mind." He had understood that in art the hand quite often guides or directs the mind. He who suffered from so many ills—he suffered from his eyes, which were growing dim—knew all the light that the body brings to the mind, and even inspiration to the soul itself. Knowing this, he knew too how much greatness and real humility is expended in works made with the hands. In memory I see again, rising out of the little valley, the church in the *Ile de France* where the Gothic arch was first used. Perhaps there are

those among you who remember the tone of his voice when he spoke of the mason of Morienvall, the man from whose hands sprang the architecture of the Middle Ages. What a glorious birth!

Two manual workers, two painters, are talking together about their profession. And they distrust the amateur. They know that this profession of painting, even in its humblest form, is their world. One either belongs to that world or one does not. It is a world in which one is either a citizen or an alien. There is no naturalization possible. It is a world, a society, closed to those who do not belong to it.

Very early Focillon had understood that the world of art, the world of *Forms*, is an entirely different world from the world of reality. He perceived and recognized this truth so thoroughly that his discernment was actually a genuine discovery. As an historian he had seen that in the development of man and of man's achievements plastic forms have a life of their own, that they are engendered and modified, or that they even kill one another according to the requirements of laws which apply *outside* the world of reality. He was completely aware of the almost total autonomy of the world of forms, and so without embarrassment or constraint he could enter into this austere yet enchanted domain of modern art. He was at home in this kingdom in which Cezanne, Renoir, and Picasso were creating quite a furore, and in which they were the masters of striking changes and daring innovations. Intuitively he knew that the artistic quality and beauty of a work of art begins only with freedom of forms—that is, in a world a little beyond the frontiers and boundaries of the world of reality. To know this was already to break through the boundaries and to cross the frontiers. And even if he was not always exactly informed about what Matisse, Bonnard, Rouault, or Picasso were doing or trying to do, Focillon knew beforehand what was being said about them in academic circles. He knew that what was called their extravagances and defiance was in reality the exercise of their essential privilege of liberty and the courage of wisdom.

But he also knew many other things; he realized that this freedom, this essential autonomy of the world of forms was not for those who play at art as at a game. He knew that artists concentrate all their efforts upon this so-called game, and that they play in dead earnestness, for art represents the work of their lifetime. Every work, he found, no matter how abstract or detached it may be, has actual weight—a weight of flesh and blood and anxiety. He knew that the purity and perfection of this freedom of forms has a direct bearing upon the dignity and elevation of the mind, and hence is one of the most striking characteristics of an epoch or a country. It is a Fifth Freedom.

Focillon had a very strong sense of the humility of art and its sister graces, liberty and freedom. Without these three there can be no truly human work. So deep was his feeling about these three essentials of all art that Focillon carefully and passionately enriched his knowledge of art by the study of the past. He looked for certitude in the general orientation of his thought. What he found was enough to establish between the historian and the masters of modern art a basis for mutual understanding—a common meeting ground.



## WHO'S WHO AND WHAT

THERE is a natural human tendency to favor the art of a past age and to think that the great artists of by-gone periods have exhausted all the possibilities of art—or that nature, having once produced a genius, is herself exhausted. The next step is to assume that the masters have set a standard which all lesser mortals (and it is taken for granted that the contemporary is a lesser) can at best try to imitate. Another tendency is for people to become so accustomed to the familiar that they develop an allergy to the new. These tendencies, once they get hold of the public mind, force the contemporary artist to become the slave of the past—to custom and convention—or to strike out on his own and utterly disregard the public he should be serving.

The crippling effects of such attitudes on the Catholic artist of today is apparent if one stops to think of the implications. The artist is obliged, if he wants a commission, to consult foremost and always the mere likes and dislikes of the Catholic people for whom he works, not the good of his art. He is denied the right to create as his intelligence tells him he ought to create; he ceases to be an artist; the patron becomes the designer of patterns, the artist the slavish executor of them.

In order to further the development of Catholic art there is needed in our Catholic schools, colleges, and seminaries a good solid understanding of art as a philosophy, and a correct description of the manner in which art slowly changes with the times the while it remains in contact with, and grows out of, the basic culture from which it springs.

☞The Christmas issue of the *Catholic Art Quarterly* is motivated by the need of art education of some such basic kind.

☞"Symbolism," a characteristically sound study by the ever appreciated friend of the CAA, GRAHAM CAREY, Route 2, Fair Haven, Vermont, is the first of a series of articles which will appear in successive numbers of the *Catholic Art Quarterly*. Following titles are "Superstition" and "Decoration."

☞The gallery subject for the Christmas issue is photography. FATHER ANGELO ZANKL, O.S.B., president of the CAA, has written a technical article on this subject for the CAQ.

☞MRS. MARTHA GENUNG STEARNS, in "Defense of Needlework," appears for the second time in the CAQ. Mrs. Stearns is one of the best authorities on needlework in the United States, and certainly is the person who best understands the social and cultural implications of this art in American life. Her address, The Mayflower, Washington, D.C.

☞"Dante on Happiness" is by DUNSTAN TUCKER, O.S.B., professor of English at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota. He hopes that CAA college art teachers will follow up this article with definitely outlined suggestions for the introduction of the kind of art program which, fitting into the Liberal Arts program, will awaken the American Catholic graduate to the Apostolate of the Arts.

☞Another approach to the art problem is "Henri Focillon" by FATHER M. A. COUTURIER, O.P., translated from the French by Sister Marie-Julie, of St. Mary of the Springs, Columbus, Ohio. The excerpt here given is part of an address given April 3, 1943, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in honor of the great French aesthetician. Father Couturier here writes as the artist-appreciator of one who, though not an artist himself, worked his way into the ways of thinking of artists and by his criticism aided in the development of true art.

THE EDITOR wishes to express his gratitude to the members of the Catholic Art Association for the many articles they have submitted for publication during the past year. There still remains room for improvement, however, especially in the matter of technical articles. We hope that more articles of this kind will be forthcoming as the year progresses, and for this reason we urge our professional artists to give the CAQ the first consideration in submitting their articles for publication.



The association may be annoyed by delays in the appearance of the *Quarterly*. These delays, again, are due to war-time circumstances over which the editor has no control. It was because of such unforeseen circumstances that the promised index did not materialize, as likewise that the Christmas issue made a late appearance.

(The cover arrangement is the work of Melville Steinfelds, our professional chairman. The hand extending out of the cloud and radiating light is the hand of God; the hand with the chisel the hand of the artist.

The merging of the two hands symbolizes that the artist is as it were the associate of God in the creation of works of art. To quote Maritain: "Artistic creation does not copy God's creation but continues it. And even as the traces and the image of God appear in His creatures, so the human character is impressed upon the work of art, the full, sensitive and spiritual character not of hands only but of the whole soul."

"A chisel," writes Mr. Steinfelds, "is an artist's tool, and also an artisan's. It expresses a relation the C.A.A. emphasizes. The artist's brush is too distinctly an artist's tool. The chisel de-emphasizes the too prevalent idea that art is exclusively the painter's province."

#### C.A.A. NEWS

A MURAL for the church of All Saints, Lakeville, Minnesota, has recently been done by SISTER IRENA, O.S.B., of the College of St. Benedict, St. Joseph, Minnesota. The painting fills the arched area over a large mahogany plaque which bears in gold the names of the deceased members of the parish. It is a colorful, symbolic representation, having as a dominant feature a resplendent Chi-Rho. The peacock, radiant candles, and the *crux gemmata* are some of the symbols used to convey the joys and the glories of a death in Christ.

Sister Irena, Northwest Regional director of the CAA and head of the art department at St. Benedict's, is also art editor of *Land and Home*, the official publication of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference.

The following is from St. Mary of the

Woods College: "As for news of the St. Mary of the Woods art department, is it news when the war goes on according to plan? Well, that is how we are going. The Centenary Course (see CAQ Vol. III, 1, page 26) is showing in our Senior class for its first *real* conclusion. So far it seems to be working beautifully. They are all on their own, working on self-initiated projects, student planned and faculty approved, leading up to one-man shows of the results at the end of the year. They love that "professional atmosphere." With the under classmen, lettering and mechanical drawing are quite popular. The arts majors work on schedule as outlined.

"We are planning wall decorations for the Le Fer Clubroom—the recreation wing of the upper classmen residence hall basement. They will be executed by the art students. Besides that we just work all day. This summer you were told of Sister Esther and her lettering activities. Both she and Sister Edith made the Metropolitan exhibit. We have had one real break, I think. The Mistress of Novices has decided that all non-canonical novices should learn lettering as a self-improvement, no-credit course. Sister Edith teaches them and they do quite well. The daily *Ordo*, always done by a novice and posted on the community bulletin board, has shown a drastic improvement! It isn't much, but it is good for the morale."

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Melville Steinfelds, professional chairman, announces that the CAA Professional Exhibit in its new clothes is back in the Midwest and that requests for it from that part of the country will be particularly welcome. It is available to institutional members, also to sustaining and patronal members. The cost: express charges to the member from the last exhibitor, plus one dollar to the Professional Chairman to cover upkeep. Send requests to the Professional Chairman, Melville Steinfelds, 228 E. Superior St., Chicago.

Copies of the Eric Gill *Memento* card may be had by sending a stamped envelope to David Hennessy, Maryfarm, R.R. 4, Easton, Pennsylvania. Graham Carey is the sponsor of this tribute to a truly noble and great artist.





